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A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN  
THE CATHEDRAL OF WORCESTER,

*On the 7th of MARCH, 1795.*

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SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE CATHEDRAL OF WORCESTER

On the 7th of MARCH, 1835.

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE  
*WORCESTER INFIRMARY.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

PREACHED IN  
*THE CATHEDRAL OF WORCESTER,*

On the 7th of MARCH, 1795,

*AT THE ASSIZES*

HELD BEFORE

SIR NASH GROSE, KNT.

*ONE OF THE JUSTICES OF HIS MAJESTY'S COURT OF KING'S BENCH,*

AND

SIR ALEXANDER THOMSON, KNT.

*ONE OF THE BARONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S COURT OF EXCHEQUER.*

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF

**WILLIAM WALDRON, ESQ.**

HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER;

AND OF THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

**THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION**

OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.

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**BY GEORGE BUTT, D. D.**

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY; RECTOR OF STANFORD-  
UPON-TEME, AND VICAR OF KIDDERMINSTER.

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE  
WORCESTER INFIRMARY.

# SERMON

PREACHED IN  
THE CATHEDRAL OF WORCESTER,  
ON the 7th of MARCH, 1795.

BY THE REV. GEORGE  
AND

THE VENERABLE FATHER OF THE MONASTERY OF WORCESTER,  
AND  
SIR ALEXANDER THOMSON, BART.  
ONE OF THE BARONS OF THE EXCHEQUER.

BY WILLIAM WALLER, ESQ.  
SACRETARY OF THE SOCIETY OF WORCESTER,  
AND OF THE AID OF THE  
THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION  
OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.

BY GEORGE BULL, D.D.

CHURCHMAN, AND AID OF THE SOCIETY OF WORCESTER,  
AND OF THE AID OF THE

WORCESTER

PRINTED AND SOLD BY HARRIS, T. & CO.

IN THE CITY OF WORCESTER, AT THE SIGN OF THE  
KEY, IN THE STREET LEADING TO THE CATHEDRAL,  
AND AT THE SIGN OF THE  
KEY, IN THE STREET LEADING TO THE CATHEDRAL,  
AND AT THE SIGN OF THE

THE END OF THE WORLD



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THE FOLLOWING  
*D I S C O U R S E,*

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO  
WILLIAM WALDRON, ESQ.  
*HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER,*  
AND THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL  
*THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION*  
OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.

BY THEIR MOST OBEDIENT,

AND

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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DISCOURS E.

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## S E R M O N.

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### Ps A L M l x v. 6.

*He ruleth with his power for ever ; his eyes  
behold the people ; and such as will not  
believe, shall not be able to exalt themselves.*

**I**N an age notoriously sceptical, and delighting in paradoxes, we may, with propriety, use arguments to prove such truths as were once received by the wisest men as uncontrovertible, if not as self-evident. Respecting the truth which is before us, the power of righteousness to exalt, and of unrighteousness to depress, a nation (for all this is insinuated in the words of my text), we must *argue*, it seems, to support it ; we must now take account of the many who perversely exclude from their view the sunshine of historical evidence, and act as if



the world was but newly made, and they possessed not a page of recorded experience.

And surely this discussion is the more necessary, when such as will not believe, are now making an awful experiment to prove, whether a great nation can flourish without the ordinary provisions for the security of righteousness, without the aid of a national religious establishment.

But it is especially proper to discuss this great question, when the most numerous and respectable audience is here assembled in reverence to that great civil solemnity, which itself is a sacred establishment to resist injuries, punish crimes, and repel the encroachment of unrighteousness.

Indeed the very appearance of this awful solemnity, supplies a comment of more force and pathos on the necessity of the religious principle, than any which you can possibly receive from one in my place, upon this important subject. For if there is *now*  
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abundant cause for this solemn visitation of the civil magistracy, think how much greater there would be, were there no religious principles amongst us to check the seeds of unrighteousness in our hearts, and prevent their growth into crimes of such a magnitude as demand this dread array of national judicature for their exemplary punishment.

But we are now to consider whether righteousness, understood in its most comprehensive sense, has not a natural tendency to exalt a nation; whether this perfect virtue, this godliness, is not most profitable unto all things, having the promise even of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come.

Public peace presents itself to us as the first means and form of national prosperity; it implies the absence of the dire alarm and insecurity, with all the other horrors occasioned by war; it allows hope to shine around us with its brightest beams, and

thereby encourages man in all his noblest and most beneficent exertions, from the lowliest and most necessary, to the most ornamental and sublime arts. One may consider (without trifling with fancy) the peace of a nation as the serenest atmosphere of the soul, as its most salubrious and reviving form of good weather, in opposition to the clouds and the turbulencies, the constant or stormy calamities of war.

The sophist of impiety may say what he cannot prove, reiterating what he knows has been repeatedly refuted, that religion itself has abundantly disturbed the public peace, has occasioned many unjust and desolating wars. And without doubt religion has been often made the pretext of such; but, whenever it was, it was then blasphemously traduced; for in reality, it had no concern in them, but substantially condemned what it was weakly, falsely, and wickedly represented to justify. If the malice of impiety, irritated, not convinced, hardened, not melted by the warm radiance



radiance of truth, still vilifies christianity as the cause of unjust wars—the benign gospel of Christ, the eternal word, still continuing the same, shines forth in the view of candid wisdom an everlasting refutation of the iniquitous charge. Whether we detect these wars as the movements of regal ambition, national hatred, commercial avarice, sacerdotal selfishness, pitiable superstition, austere bigotry, republican envy, or fanatical fury—we find in them no Christianity; but in Christianity, a most awful condemnation of these incendiary causes.

In the civilized parts of the earth, some good name has been always abused as the pretext of wars originating in injustice; and the fancy has been thus bribed into the admission of the calamity. Religion, liberty, philosophy, any terms of splendid respectability, suffice to cover the fraud, till a deluge of bloodshed and misery have wrought men into the most pungent sense of the pernicious delusion.

Was

Was it the pretence of religion (asks a recent and most eminent defender of Christianity) which led Alexander into the East, and Cæsar into the West?—Various, alas! are the means to strike this spark of war out of the flinty heart of man. But why should religion *now* be defended against an idle calumny, since the monster Atheism, not long ago, has shewn us that when he charges to battle, and cries havoc to death even where no battle is, he cases his heart in iron, and steeps his hundred arms up to their elbows in blood, not to destroy religion, as he purposes, but to prove the necessity of it, and to refute by his deeds the charge which his visionary and malignant school had brought against her.

The righteousness in which we are concerned, the religion of the charitable Jesus, cannot but be favourable to public peace, for it enjoins every principle and temper conducive to it, and reprobates all the vices which tend to alienate man from man.—The Christian considers his foe as his dear brother

brother occasionally in contest with him, and tenderly compassionates the mighty numbers in a great nation, who are to suffer from the contest which they had not provoked. He detests every form of contention, but that of a necessary and honourable self-defence; yet, when this is the case, he cannot but be inspired with those motives of heroic exertion, which are the likeliest to reward it with a speedy and victorious conclusion of the contest. His obedience to government is ready, his patriotism ardent, his magnanimity founded on the greatest views, and, when duty calls, he is the first of all men to hazard property and life in its cause; for he has the least of all men to fear and to regret in death.

Whether, therefore, a nation is exalted by peace, or the ability of supporting itself with renown under the visitation of war, the principal means of this exaltation proceed from righteousness.

One may hastily conceive that a nation  
may



may be a collection of happy individuals, and yet without exaltation or glory in the view of other nations—but that the truth is otherwise, a little reflection will convince us.

Happiness is not a childish volatility of good spirits, an infantine play of mind, out of its place and period, accompanied with the insecurities of infantine ignorance, and liable to the rapid revolutions of infantine petulance. Happiness is of a firmer and sedater complexion than this; is more allied with reason than with passion; is prepared for evil, yet lays the foundation of good; gathers its good when it is duly ripened by circumstances, and *does* not, like a child, rend it, fruit, branch, and tree: in short, happiness is the result of that conduct which views the past with self approbation, the future with hope, and the present with tranquillity.

When a whole people bear the stamp of this character upon them, they are not only  
a happy

a happy, but admired people; this admiration strengthens the foundations of their happiness, and the consciousness of this reputation abroad is an additional part of it, since it cannot but occur to them that they are then reputed a wise and well principled people, possessing all the virtues included in the term righteousness. But if a happy nation is in fact a large society of pious, honest, temperate, benevolent, and prudent individuals, and not a collection of impious, unjust, intemperate, selfish, and imprudent men, righteousness must exalt a nation. A nation is composed of the governed and the governors, which description, seen through the eyes of righteousness, exhibits a division of duties, and an union of interests, unfolding the patriarchal image of one happy family.

The individuals, who constitute the collective body of subjects, exalt a nation in the proportion that they excel in the discharge of their duty to themselves, and as neighbours and subjects. This excellence is the

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proper

proper fruit of righteousness, for the fears and hopes respecting a future state, revealed by religion, the encouragements and animations to virtuous endeavour which arise from the doctrines of redemption, efficacious penitence, and divine aid, and the holy representation of God himself and his blessed Son, as the examples which, as far as is possible, we are to imitate, are surely such instructions to man respecting the grandeur of his nature and his destinations, as must inspire him with a due contempt of things terrestrial, with the most genuine magnanimity, and an ambition to advance the human into the angelic character. He then accounts all the evils of life but as the means of his best terrestrial good, heroic exertion; conducted by the captain of his salvation, he traverses this wilderness without fear, having in view his heavenly Canaan; proposing to himself a godlike conduct, and the rewards of a glorious eternity, he adorns himself with all the purity and modest dignity of those virtues which he owes to himself *individually*; he is mild, humble, merciful, just,



just, and benevolent to his fellow-creatures; divested of avarice, vanity, pride, and envy, he becomes altogether heavenly in his temper, principles, and conversation; the beauty of public order is congenial to such a character; the charms of public peace meet all its humanities; the divinest form of patriotism is essential to it, for it is never narrowed by faction, debased by cabal, distorted by intrigue, or polluted by meanness; he reverences the guardian majesty of national law, and pays a cordial obedience to its venerable administrators: in short, his righteousness directly leads to civil obedience, renders him peaceable in his demeanour, and solicitous for the public good, and as directly adorns him with those qualities and affections which most exalt him in his personal and social character. He is acquainted with God, and is at peace from the harrassing doubts and turbulent irritations of the sceptic and infidel; contented himself, he is not disposed to disturb the peace of society. A nation composed of such subjects, must be exalted in their righteousness.

And

And surely righteousness restrains the supreme magistrate from misbehaviour, and persuades him into the noblest discharge of his high office; for it apprizes him of the King of Kings, it presents to him the eyes of God as beholding him as well as the people, it instructs him in all the virtues that most kindly foster the faculties and inclinations favourable to his royal function, and insinuates into his soul a light and a spirit to see and execute a wider course of beneficence than is visible to the selfishness of unrighteousness; it opens to his faith the last solemn day of account; by the visions of futurity it shews him the nothingness of all sublunary grandeur, the folly, the impertinence, and insolence of pride in any description of man, on account of any terrestrial privilege or distinction; it prompts him to greater labours, and a more heroic generosity for the benefit of mankind, and cheers him with a superior alacrity in the discharge of his sublime office, and by referring him principally to the praise and rewards of God and his own conscience, it arms him with the utmost magnanimity; hence arises  
peace

peace within, and glory without, rendering that sword of majesty, which is efficacious by the plenitude of strength, august by the radiance of renown. The supreme magistrate then is truly great and disinterested, adored by his people, esteemed by his allies, dreaded by his enemies, and admired by all men, wearing a brighter crown than man can give him; he visibly lives and acts in a glorious sphere for the benefit of mankind, deriving from righteousness the principal means of thus fulfilling the important ends of his exalted station.

And thus it appears that the supreme governor of a state, is best qualified to govern it, by that very righteousness which is most conducive to the best behaviour of the governed; and thus religion, by dispersing the vapours and mists of gross and earthly affections from the regal character, exhibits the sun of sovereign majesty in all its fostering warmth and salutary splendor, whilst by the same means it equally unfolds the lesser luminaries of the executive government in their brightest lustre.

Take



Take the instance which is before us; respecting the public—is there any thing of more consequence than that pure administration of law, which is the grand and ultimate security of our lives and properties? But how can we reasonably expect this pure administration of law, if we did not reasonably expect that, in consequence of our holy religion here established, the hearts of the judge, the advocate, and the jury, were stimulated to a faithful discharge of their respective duties by the fear of God, and an awful attention to that day when they shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Can you *imagine* any motive so strong as this for this great end, or that this too is not the strongest to prevent the crimes and injuries, for the suppression, the trial, and punishment of which, this sacred solemnity is ordained?

And now give me your pardon if, in this age of fretful innovation and all-rending theory, I should digress in asking you, whether the history of mankind has shewn  
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in any age so pure an administration of law as has prevailed in this nation, more especially from the period of the Revolution?

And now too let me presume to observe that, from the above-mentioned period to the present day, Christianity has in this country displayed itself more and more with all its benign and genuine influence, and with that growing evidence of its truth, which results from rational disquisition, solid learning, and the most liberal candour in its eminent and numerous defenders.

I doubt not but that you will admit the coincidence, and will, in a great degree, ascribe the pure administration of law, that most material instrument of national prosperity, to the influence of the religious principle.

Yet, whilst we are at war with a nation fiercely republican, we owe it to candour, we owe it to the exigencies of the times, and we owe it to loyal gratitude to recollect, to  
record,

record, and to proclaim (if possible) within the reach of every British ear throughout the British empire, that every monarch who has reigned in this country from the æra of the revolution has been distinguished by religious probity, and such a reverence for the pure administration of law, as not only to entitle them to our gratitude, but, perhaps, to furnish a document and proof, that the regal office, circumscribed as it is by our free constitution, should be cherished by true philosophy as a proper form of character and authority to add efficient majesty to the administration of law, and repel any injuries from it that may elsewhere arise.

It will not admit of a doubt but that the supreme and subordinate executors of the law will discharge their sacred trust with most fidelity and zeal under the influence of the religious principle, and respecting the two other great governing estates of the realm, can ye hesitate a moment to pronounce, that a thorough sense of Christian equity, candour, humility, and generosity—a thorough faith  
in



in the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, will have the most power to subdue every mean, selfish, factious, and ambitious tendency that may interfere with the pure, the magnanimous, and active discharges of their sacred trust in these august bodies.

Thus efficacious is Righteousness for securing the good conduct of those who occupy the place of government.

And here it may not be impertinent to the important point which I have in view, to assert in the most unqualified manner, that our commerce, that column or strength of the nation, must fall, whatever may be the extent of our dominions, whatever the power of our fleets and armies, if it has not for its base the integrity of our manufacturers and merchants, or, in other words, the principles of righteousness in them.

Whether or no the slave-trade accords with these principles, is a question which it

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behoves

behoves every Briton to determine; for be assured, that in this awful crisis of our country we are alarmingly called upon to look up to him from whom alone salvation cometh, whose eyes behold the people, every people—the poor, oppressed, untutored Africans, as well as the powerful and polished Europeans.

But should the vain spirit which rejects the wisest decrees of all preceding ages, or should the disordered mind whose distemperature admits not the reception of demonstrated truth, still urge from their exceptionous school, that government is unnecessary to man, or might subsist without religion, one readily answers, that if men associate without government, they cannot associate long; the clash of humours and interests, unmitigated by a general rule, would convert the society into a short lived rencounter of wolves and tigers. The universal existence of governments shews the necessity of them, but that they have not yet answered all their ends proves what man would be without them.

The

The necessity of government is not to be questioned, if it is necessary for man to associate with man; and before we question this necessity, we should consider the probable state of unassociated man; his wretchedness and depravity cannot be imaged to us by that of the most depraved and miserable human creature in society. One has read of the slumbrous stupefaction of the savage Indian in his cave, after he has done his only human work, the catching and devouring of his prey, devouring it with such a ravenous appetite and in such a quantity as to occasion the worst diseases of indigestion; I speak not of the mind totally unlettered, of the manners totally uncivilized, and of the body suffering many maladies from its exposure to the surrounding elements. The last sparkles of the reasonable being are then smothered beneath the ruins of all animal comforts. Imagination turns with horror from the conception, and reason disdains to hold any farther arguments against the adoption of a system that threatens the extinction of the human understanding, and the conversion of the man into the brute.

Society



Society is necessary to man, government to society, and religion to government. Moral probity in the subject, is surely necessary for the well-being of a state; it cannot be denied but that moral probity will be better secured by the belief of a God and a future state of rewards and punishments; it is clear that this belief is best founded on a divine revelation; it is equally clear that this revelation will be better known by such a wide dispensation of teachers as that the truth may be within the reach of all men, and it is certain that these teachers are not humanly to be expected, if such rewards are not forthcoming from the government as will secure a sufficiency of them for its purpose. The inference is obvious—the necessity of an established religion whose union with the state prepares the subject to obey, for conscience-sake, the laws of the land.

But some say, and what will not man now say, that right and wrong, virtue and vice are mere fancies, and arbitrary words bearing no relation to things—but that this distinction really exists in the nature of things,

things, cannot be doubted, for no government can be imagined so powerful as to be able to decree their subjects into wickedness, or so foolish as to wish to do it if they could; for if they did, it would be a sort of suicide or voluntary dissolution of itself into anarchy. A rare and monstrous attempt has been lately made, not indeed to confound the old distinctions between right and wrong, but to rob them of their old support, the belief of a God and a future state. But it seems that the device was not thought a wise one by our philosophical foes; a better philosophy has now taken place, and, God grant, that it may be a step to a better Christianity than they have ever yet known.

I have pressed upon your patience too long, but I have been discussing a very weighty argument, and will intrude upon you no farther than by a serious application of the whole which I have laid before you.

Since then government is an ordinance of light and force to instruct and preserve men in the practice of what is right, to secure the  
ends

ends of civil association ; and since the more perfect a government is the more it advances these ends, with their only means, virtuous principles and practices.

The chief magistrate, would he be obeyed, must yield all the encouragement which he can to righteousness, and thence diffuse among his people the principles and tempers most favourable to peace and good order ; would he bless his people, and satisfy the purpose of his sacred function, he cannot take any better means than the advancement of righteousness.

Would the chief magistrate and subjects unite in a generous contest who shall most oblige the other, (the only contest which should subsist between them), they must unite in furthering the universal influence of righteousness ; would they testify the truest patriotism, are they zealous for national renown, would they afford all the world, all the coming ages of mankind, the instruction and benefaction of the noblest example,  
they



they must become a religious people ; would they exalt the human character into its highest form, or would they present to the hopes of man their brightest objects, they must ask of Righteousness to unfold the gospel of Christ, and to lay before them the eternal rewards of his true followers ; to shew man his godlike birth and godlike capacities, and to raise that head, which abundantly droops beneath the burthens of earth, into a view of those mansions where the wicked cease from troubling, where the mourners are at rest, are comforted, are more than comforted, and where they who have believed, and obeyed him who ruleth with his power for ever, shall be able to exalt themselves in a manner more than correspondent to the grandeur of our natural ambition, and the fondest tendency of our aspirations after felicity.

But that, finally, from the justice of Him, whose eyes are over all the peoples, the exaltation of a nation may be expected from their righteousness, one must be morally certain ;

certain ; for what after all is righteouſneſs but a conduct in man agreeable to the will of God ; but, reſpecting God, the loyalty of a ſubject to the only ſovereign to whom the moſt unqualified obedience is due ; but the dutiful and affectionate ſubmiſſion of a ſon to the beſt and kindeſt father ; and the acquieſcence of a creature in the commands of his creator : but, in ſhort, a diſcharge of duty to the King of Kings, the Father of all, the Creator of the univerſe, and, in one word, God ?

Whether, therefore, we ſearch the light of reaſon and experience, the moſt obvious ſentiments of nature, or the ſloweſt deductions of reflection ; whether we view our own capacity of obedience, or the right of God to that obedience, we infer that he muſt exalt a righteous, and puniſh a rebellious nation.

This is the inference which we cannot but make from the preceding reflections ; and would to God that we could make it with the utmoſt ſatiſfaction from the view of our own righteouſneſs as a people.

Oh !

Oh! then let me beseech thee, O God, who rulest with thy power for ever, whose eyes behold this people, to render them such by thy grace, that, at this awful crisis of their country, they may so believe, so repent, and so obey thee, as to be able to exalt themselves in whatsoever thou judgest best for their welfare throughout Time and Eternity.

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Old men let me beseech thee, O God,  
 who rulest with thy power for ever, whose  
 eyes behold this people, to render them such  
 by thy grace, that at this awful crisis of  
 their country, they may be able to believe,  
 and to obey thee, as to be able to exalt  
 themselves in whatsoever thou judgest best  
 for their welfare throughout Time and  
 Eternity.



